

§ 152.6

we will allow each fire department to apply for only one vehicle per year.

§ 152.6 Application review and award process.

(a) As stated in §152.5, we will evaluate each application in the preliminary screening process to determine which applications best address the program's established priorities. The best applications as determined in this preliminary step will be deemed to be in the "competitive range." All applications in the competitive range will be subject to a second level review by a technical evaluation panel. Using the evaluation criteria delineated in §152.5, the panelists will score each application they evaluate. The assigned score will reflect the degree to which the applicant: clearly relates their proposed project; demonstrates financial need; and, details a high benefit to cost value of the proposed activities.

(b) Our award decisions will be based on the stated priorities of the grant program, the demonstrated need of the applicant, and the benefits to be derived from the proposed projects. We will make awards on a competitive basis, i.e., we will fund the highest scored applications before considering lower scored applications.

(c) In order to fulfill our obligations under the law, we may also make funding decisions using rank order as the preliminary basis then based on the type of fire department (paid, volunteer, or combination fire departments), the size and character of the community it serves (urban, suburban, or rural), and the geographic location of the fire department. In these instances where we are making decisions based on geographic location, we will use States as the basic geographic unit.

§ 152.7 Grant payment, reporting and other requirements.

(a) Grantees will have twelve months to incur obligations to fulfill their responsibilities under this grant program. The performance period of each grant will be detailed in the Articles of Agreement that we provide each grantee. Grantees may request funds from us as reimbursement for expenditures made under the grant program or they may request funds for immediate cash

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needs under FEMA regulations (44 CFR 13.21).

(b) Generally, fire departments should not use grant funds to pay for products and services contracted for, or purchased prior to the effective date of the grant. However, we will consider requests for reimbursement for these on an exceptional basis. Expenses incurred after the application deadline but prior to award may be eligible for reimbursement if the expenses were justified, unavoidable, consistent with the scope of work, and specifically approved by us.

(c) The recipients of funding under this program must report to us on how the grant funding was used and the benefits that resulted from the grant. This will be accomplished via submission of a final report. Details regarding the reporting requirements will be provided in the Articles of Agreement provided to each grantee. Additionally, fire departments that receive funding under this program must agree to provide information to the national fire incident reporting system (NFIRS) for the period covered by the assistance. If a grantee does not currently participate in the incident reporting system and does not have the capacity to report at the time of the award, that grantee must agree to provide information to the system for a twelve-month period commencing as soon as they develop the capacity to report.

§ 152.8 Application submission and deadline.

For each year that this program is authorized after fiscal year 2002, we will announce the grants availability via Notice of Funds Availability. That notice will contain all pertinent information concerning the eligible funding activities, priority funding levels (as appropriate), application period, timelines, and deadlines.

§ 152.9 Technical or procedural error.

(a) We will review our decision with respect to a particular application only where the applicant alleges that we have made a material technical or procedural error and can substantiate

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such allegation. Requests for reconsideration based upon technical or procedural error should be directed to: Director, Grants Program Office, U.S. Fire Administration, FEMA, 500 C Street, SW., room 304, Washington, DC 20472.

(b) We must receive a request for reconsideration under paragraph (a) of this section within 60 days of the date of the notice of our decision.

(c) As grants are awarded on a competitive basis, in accordance with the

findings of an independent panel of experts, we will not entertain requests for reconsideration based upon the merits of an original application. Similarly, we will not consider new information provided after the submission of the original application. In the case of new information, we encourage applicants to incorporate said information into their applications for future grant cycles.

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